The Myrtle.

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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What the Sparrow Chirps.

I AM only a little sparrow,
A bird of low degree;
My life is of little value,
But the dear Lord careth for me.

He gave me a coat of feathers,—
It is very plain, I know,
With never a speck of crimson,
For it was not made for show.

But it keeps me warm in winter,
And it shields me from the rain;
Were it bordered with gold or purple,
Perhaps it would make me vain.

And now that the spring-time cometh,
I will build me a little nest,
With many a chirp of pleasure,
In the spot I like the best.

I have no barn nor storehouse,
I neither sow nor reap;
God gives me a sparrow's portion,
But never a seed to keep.

If my meal is sometimes scanty,
Close picking makes it sweet;
I have always enough to feed me,
And "life is more than meat."

I know there are many sparrows—
All over the world we are found;
But our Heavenly Father knoweth
When one of us falls to the ground.

Though small, we are never forgotten;
Though weak, we are never afraid;
For we know that the dear Lord keepeth
The life of the creatures he made.

I fly through the thickest forest,
I light on many a spray;
I have no chart nor compass,
But I never lose my way.

And I fold my wings at twilight,
Wherever I happen to be;
For the Father is always watching,
And no harm will come to me.

I am only a little sparrow,
A bird of low degree;
But I know the Father loves me,—
Have you less faith than we?

The Child's Paper.

For the Myrtle.

A Frog Scare.

"WA-CHUG! wa-chug!" Nobody has ever told us what this spring song of the frogs may mean, in English; but I can tell you what some frightened people thought it meant on a certain spring night a great many years ago, in old Connecticut.

At least, I can tell you what my good old aunt used to tell us about it, when I was no larger than the smallest child who reads this; and I think, because my aunt told it, it must be true.

The people had an idea in those days that the world might come to an end at any time; and if there was any unusual event, like an eclipse of the sun, or the shock of an earthquake, they at once began to fear that the end of the world had come.

Well, one night in early spring, after a long

spell of dry weather, so strange for that season, the people of a certain village heard a very strange noise. At first it commenced faintly, but soon it grew louder and louder until it filled the whole air. It was like nothing they had ever heard — not like the sound of a trumpet, nor of thunder, nor of falling rocks and stones; but as if it might be made up of all, mixed together. They had a confused idea, from things in the Bible which they did not understand, that the heavens and earth would be destroyed with a great noise, and that the bodies of the dead, as well as the living, who were to be saved, would be caught up into the air. So when they heard this strange noise they sprang up in great excitement, crying, "The trumpets are sounding and the graves are opening! The end of the world has come!"

Catching on the first clothing they could find, they all rushed out and hurried to the meeting-house as fast as they could. The old minister was with them and tried to keep them as calm as possible, though there was shrieking and sobbing as well as praying and singing.

Still the noise went on, growing all the time more dreadful, until it seemed to be right over their heads and under their feet; then it began to grow a little farther away, and then the minister thought that perhaps they ought not to be in the meeting-house, but ought to go out to meet their Lord to be caught up into the air. So they formed a solemn procession, still singing and praying, and went with fear and trembling towards where the noise came from. It was now just at the break of day; and as they marched out towards the meadow, what do you think they found, as the cause of the noise? Instead of trumpets and earthquakes, it was the "wa-chug! wa-chug!" of hundreds of frogs, that were crossing the swamp, in a great army, from a pond which was now almost dry, to a deeper and fuller one half a mile the other side of the village!

My aunt used always to laugh when she got to the end of the scare; but I remember how we used to pity the poor children who were waked up in the night and made to believe that the world was being destroyed, and something dreadful was going to happen to them.

We were glad, and I am glad now, that we live in brighter days; when the Bible is better understood, and Christians believe that every day is a day of judgment, and that God is the loving Father of the world and wishes not to destroy his children, but to save them.

For the Myrtle.

Tommy Gray's Journey.

A YEAR and a half passed away, and Tommy had endeared himself to every member of the family. His goodness, his amiability and his honesty won the hearts of all, and he was petted as much as any reasonable being could desire.

For some months Mr. May's health had been failing, and it was now decided that he must go into the country to live, and Tommy Gray was to go too. Such a time as there was packing and repacking boxes, trunks and bundles! Such hammering, pounding, slam-banging and thumping! Before they got through it seemed to Tommy that every foot in the house had hit him an accidental kick, and every box been set on his tail.

"How can we manage to carry the kittie?" asked Mr. May.

Mary was equal to the occasion, as usual, and made a kind of cage of a good-sized box, by placing slats across the front, leaving one off till Tommy was put in. Eva and Lizzie, with Tommy, were to go before the rest of the family and stop a week at the house of a friend, while the furniture was being arranged in the new house. After riding an hour in the cars, they were to take a stage and ride all day, stopping at a little New Hampshire town for dinner.

At eight o'clock in the morning, Lizzie placed a little plate of meat in Tommy's cage, and put him in to eat, so he would not be frightened while they were putting on the other slat. Mary had made some gimlet holes in the box, and driven the nails through each end of the slat, so, by pressing them firmly into the holes, they would hold without scaring Tommy by pounding with a hammer. By the time he had finished eating the meat, kittie was securely fastened into the cage. At first he did not care at all, thinking it was some of Lizzie's play, and that she would soon let him out; but when Mary took up the box, by a handle on the top, and began to carry him to the depot, he felt rather frightened, and

tried, by reaching his little gray arm through the slats, to get out. Lizzie said he was waving farewell to his former home. At last he found it was useless. Mary had fastened it so tight that he could not break it, so he laid resignedly down on the carpet which covered the floor of the box, and calmly waited to see what would turn up. In the depot he attracted a great deal of attention. The ladies and children praised his fine form, and beautiful color, while Lizzie sat by his cage, proud as a queen. Soon he was carried into the cars. At first he was angry because they had deceived him, and teased him into the box, with that saucer of meat. He turned his back resolutely toward Lizzie, with his nose directed to the darkest corner of the cage, and would not turn around when she spoke, nor take any notice when she put her hand through the bars and stroked his back. At last, however, he thought she had been punished enough, so he turned around and settled himself comfortably, not at all frightened, knowing no harm could reach him while Lizzie was near. He seemed very well satisfied with himself and his surroundings, and when Eva put the box on the opposite seat he gazed around on the people, and squinted up his eyes in a peculiar way he had, which Lizzie called "Tommy Gray's grin"; and really it seemed very much like a contented smile. Here, too, he was praised and noticed enough to turn the head of any ordinary person; and I imagine his had been turned completely around, till it came back to its right position again, and he regarded all this as his just due. At noon he ate his dinner of bread and milk in the box, and seemed to relish it very much.

When they arrived at A——, where they were to live, it was cold and dark. Lizzie was so tired and sleepy that she was almost ready to cry, and Eva so hungry and cold that she was quite ready to scold everybody that came near. Mrs. Robinson, the lady they were to visit, took them right into the warm, bright kitchen, and, putting the cage down by the sink, began to get supper for the girls.

Tommy was very well satisfied with this, for he was tired and cold, and the kitchen was warm; but when they began to eat, he got rather impatient, and at last thought it time to remind them that he was hungry, too. So he suddenly startled them with a prolonged w-w-r-r-r-o-o-o-w, and putting his arm as far through the bars as he could reach, he waved it to and fro, as a signal of distress. He came out then, you may be sure, and had a good supper.

Tommy, Lizzie and Eva stayed there a week, and Tommy behaved as sensibly as any one could wish, sleeping in the barn, and only coming into the house for his meals. One morning he came for his breakfast, and, lo! it was placed in his box. "You can't catch me again," thought Tommy; and, waiting till no one was near, then putting his paw through the slats, he pulled the meat out on the floor, and ate it at his ease. However, he had to be put in the box and moved to the new house, willing or not. When the box was opened he crawled out, walked up to Mrs. May, smelled of her dress, to Mr. May, smelled of his foot, then to every article of furniture in the room, and, finding they were his own folks and his own furniture, he seemed to realize that this was to be his home; so he rubbed back and forth against the chairs, purring loudly, to testify his joy.

Since then he has made another journey, for Mr. May bought a farm near Boston, and they all moved again, Tommy going in the same box, and he seemed to rather enjoy it. The girls stopped a week at the house of their uncle, about forty miles from the new house. Here, as at Mrs. Robinson's, Tommy spent his time in the barn, only coming into the kitchen for his meals. The morning they were to start for the new home, while Tommy was eating his breakfast, Eva said, "Kittie, you must not go out again, for we are going away at ten o'clock"; and Tommy understood, for, instead of going directly to the outside door, as was his invariable custom, he sat down by the stove and waited there till nearly ten o'clock; then, when Lizzie put his box on the floor, he walked right into it. Every one in that family acknowledges that he is a wonderful cat.

Early Training.

He who checks a child with terror,
  Stops its play and stills its song,
Not alone commits an error,
  But a grievous moral wrong.

Give it play, and never fear it—
  Active life is no defect;
Never, never break its spirit;
  Curb it only to direct.

Would you stop the flowing river,
  Thinking it would cease to flow?
Onward it must flow forever,—
  Better teach it where to go.

For the Myrtle.

Going into the Country.

"EVERY day brings something new," said Belle.

"Yes, that's an old proverb," said her father.

"Well, I didn't know it," said Belle. "I'm sure I never thought of it before."

"So you made it, did you? Well, everybody finds it out for himself, I think. The days carry us right along with them, and we have to be pretty busy to keep up with them."

"Only think!" said Belle; "a little while ago it was Christmas, and then there was nothing like the holidays and having grandpa and grandma come; and then was Fred's party, and it seemed as though there was never anything so nice as that; and after that we had to get ready for the Sunday School Exhibition; and then we had the May Festival at school. And now we're going into the country, and the others don't seem like anything! I'd rather give up everything else in the year than going up to grandpa's."

"I'm glad my little girl finds so much enjoyment in everything," said her mamma, who sat packing laces; "and I hope we shall all have as pleasant a summer as we expect."

"And I *do* hope," said the other grandma, who was busy with the packing, "I *do* hope you won't any of you be sick. Belle *must* take care and not eat green fruit, nor run herself to death of hot days."

"Never fear, grandma," said Belle, laughing; "my other grandma keeps too sharp an eye on me for that."

"Well, I'm thankful she does," said grandma, shortly.

"So you think," resumed her father, "that every new thing is a little better than the old?"

"Why, yes," said Belle, beginning to think about it — "any way, it seems so in the time of it."

"Yes, that is it," said her father. "There is a text of Scripture — I wonder if you know it — that says, 'He maketh everything beautiful *in its season*.' And again, 'There is a *time* for everything.' Everything in life comes around in its season, and seems the best thing for that time. And when we come to die — I don't know — I suppose that will seem the best thing then."

"Yes, I think so," answered Belle. She had risen, and was standing by her father's chair.

Her father was surprised at her reply, for he was talking half to himself. "*Why* do you think so?" he inquired.

"Because that will be going to a new place, won't it? And I think we shall get tired of the old one, and want something new by that time."

"And I think that is a very wise answer," said her father tenderly.

UNDERSTANDING is a well-spring of life.

For the Myrtle.

Chick-a-biddies.

CHICKIE, chickie, chickie!

Just look this way and see what I've got in this basin, and what I'm shaking out on the ground, and then you'll run fast enough. Cluck, cluck, yes, old hen, you see my wooden spoon, don't you? and you know what the basin means! you've raised chickens before!

Here you come, the whole six, with mother biddy ahead, stretching her neck, and making her feet fly until I can hardly see them. Whitey and Blackie, Spottie and Brownie, Red-top and little Pip, you are all here. O you funny little puff-balls! I wonder how such lovely little yellow chicks *can* grow up into such homely old hens!

There, there! no crowding. There is enough meal for you all. Here Pip, go over there, all by yourself. Big chicks should never snatch

away from little ones, — didn't you know that, Red-top?

Craw, craw, — don't you pick, old Biddy. Shoo! go and eat your corn. I don't like your sharp bill and your yellow eyes so near. I shouldn't pick anybody that was feeding my chickens, I know!

Oh, I know you! you're a naughty old biddy. Don't I remember how you hid your nest away, when we didn't want you to set — and how Tom found it and took all the eggs out and you set on the straw, and how he put a brick in and you set on the brick, and then he threw you in the water-tub and tied a red string to you? Don't *I* know? And then you hid your nest down in the currant bushes where we couldn't find it, and hatched all these chickies. And then didn't Tom see you strutting around, saying, "Cluck, cluck, cluck, who's beat this time?"

But I'm glad you did, Biddy, for I shouldn't have had any chickies if you hadn't. All the rest are chickie Smiths, but Tom gave these to me, so they are all chickie Lulus. It's Biddie Smith and Blackie Lulu, — that's because I've 'dopted them.

There's the last bit of dough in the basin. Peep, peep, — did you wish it was more? No, you've had enough, and now I shall get you some clear water to rinse your pretty bills. Oh, how I wish I could catch one! Pip, come Pip — no, you shan't be frightened. Now go to sleep under Biddy's wings. That's the roof of your little house.

Oh, I hear something! Somebody is in the house, and says, "Where's my little Chick-a-biddy?" No, no, biddy, you needn't run this time. That means *me!*

What are the Stars?

Are they white lambs — those stars on high,
That, when the daystar sinks in night,
Still feed in pastures of the sky,
And to the shepherds lend their light?

Or silver lilies are they there,
With sweetest petals open spread,
That, when we mortals rest from care,
Their fragrance o'er the weary shed?

Or consecrated candles tall,
That on God's altar shine so bright,
The darkness of our earthly ball
To dissipate with softest light?

Ah, no! they are the letters fair
With which good angels, clothed in white,
Sweet hymns of love for us prepare,
And in heaven's book of record write.

For the Myrtle.

Three Rings.

THREE rings have I, three little rings,
Which graced the fingers of our Alice;
Her fingers then were tiny things,
And she our first to fill love's chalice.

"What useless golden toys are these?"
Some ask about my pretty treasures;
Forgetting that the things which please
Are often in the smallest measures.

These tiny circles, made of gold,
Have charms that throw a value o'er them,
And sometimes in my thoughts they hold
The image sweet of her who wore them.

Faith, hope, and love, I name the three,
And none too sacred is the naming;
For they are symbols unto me
Of love that's all the world reclaiming —

The love which prompts my little verse,
And circles hearts of child and mother, —
The Love which rings the universe,
And binds all souls to One — Our Father.

R. Fisk, Jr., D. D.

April 14, 1871.

Useless Treasure.

A rich nobleman was once showing a friend a great collection of precious stones, whose value was almost beyond counting. There were diamonds, and pearls, and rubies, and gems from almost every country on the globe, which had been gathered by their possessor with the greatest labor and expense. "And yet," he remarked, "they yield me no income."

His friend replied that he had two stones which cost him about ten florins each, yet they yielded him an income of two hundred florins a year.

In much surprise the nobleman desired to see the wonderful stones, when the man led him down to his mill and pointed to the toiling, gray mill-stones. They were laboriously crushing the grain into snowy flour, for the use of hundreds who depended on this work for their daily bread. The two dull, homely stones did more good in the world, and yielded a larger income, than all the nobleman's jewels.

IF you become accustomed to good thoughts and to good actions in early life, it will be the easier to continue in this way through all your days. Begin now to be good, young as you may may be. The good boy will be likely to be the good man.

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

On Sunday, May 7, was holden the fourteenth anniversary of the Sunday School at North Bridgewater. We hear of it as a very happy occasion, the reports of the superintendent and other officers being admirably given, and the singing and recitations of the children adding their charm to the occasion; while addresses were made by the pastor, Rev. I. M. Atwood, and others. The anniversary and concert united seems to us an improvement on both. The school numbers about one hundred and seventy, has a library of nearly six hundred volumes, and is largely increasing its subscription to the MYRTLE, with which in its new form the little ones are much pleased.

—— The North Cambridge school celebrated its *first* anniversary on the same day. It was an occasion of unusual interest, and the whole society were present to witness the exercises. Reports were made by the officers and addresses by the pastor, Rev. W. A. Start, Profs. Shipman and Fay of Tufts College, and Hon. Gideon Haynes of Charlestown. An original hymn, by Mrs. Start, was given, with other singing by the children.

——The superintendent of the Sabbath School of the Second Society at Lynn is making an effort to obtain the names of his whole school as signers of the total abstinence pledge. He has not yet succeeded with every name, but when that good time comes he will have them printed in gold letters and hung in the school-room. An anecdote about this may be of interest:

A teacher, in endeavoring to induce the members of her class to sign the pledge, urged this motive upon one who wished to drink cider, that it was not fit to drink because of the filthy process by which it was made. She said she had seen men treading among the apples to be ground, covered with dirt, and, moreover, all the poor, decayed apples were used and all the worms ground up and mixed in. "Oh," said one girl, "I never thought of that; it is bad for the worms," and signed the pledge apparently from compassion for the worms.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

We copied from the *Banner* in a late MYRTLE that the school at Weare had just celebrated its *fiftieth* anniversary. A friend informs us the types should have said the *fifth*, the school having been organized in 1866. It was only a mistake of *nothing*.

RHODE ISLAND.

At Woonsocket the ladies keep up their Centenary meetings and make them very pleasant. The school is wide-awake and prosperous.

KANSAS.

The Sunday School in Lawrence is growing rapidly. The new church in that place will soon be completed. Already the lecture room is occupied.

THE PAPER.

We hear from many schools of the great pleasure the MYRTLE is giving in its new form. A friend in Red Wing, Minn., thanks us for efforts put forth for the Sunday School, especially grateful to them where they have no church nor pastor; and another in Afton, N. Y., expresses the pleasure of the whole school at the appearance of the MYRTLE, and adds that the lessons will be adopted. The editor of the *Helper* writes of it, "If you hold the quality of future issues up to what we have alrerdy seen, you will assuredly have the best Sunday School paper published by any denomination."

We give the following little letter exactly as it was written:

Dear Editor:

I am a little girl nine years old, and I do not get to go to a Universalist Sunday School, although I go to a Union Sunday School, and I want the MYRTLE. I have saved my money till I have enough to get it for a year. Enclosed you will find seventy-five cents. Please send me the first of the volume, as I wish to bind them. My address is

IDA F. SMITH,
Mulberry, Ohio.

"The Missionary Box."

Let us call attention again to this beautiful little paper lately issued at New York. It is to be published quarterly, by the United States Convention of Universalists. We suppose that a copy of the paper is to be sent to every person or family who may have contributed through the Missionary Boxes to the funds of the United States Convention. We wish the little paper could be read by all the friends of our Christian cause, old and young. It would surely convince them that the little Missionary Box in every family is one of the best means that can be employed to enlarge the Missionary funds of our denomination. These funds are needed to send missionaries into new places, to distribute our tracts and other publications, and to aid young men in preparing themselves for the ministry.

We ought to have at least fifty thousand of these boxes in the Universalist families of our land. Five cents a week to each — which would average about one cent a week to each member of a family — would amount to one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars a year. Or, take half that number, and we might raise through them more than sixty thousand dollars. One cent a week to each box would amount to more than twelve thousand dollars a year. Let us have the Missionary Box in every family where our precious faith is known and welcomed.

True Riches.

Almost all young people desire to become rich; but all do not get riches in money and in earthly things. But all may have riches if they will seek them aright; and riches, too, that they will not be likely to lose. Some good writer thus tells us how we may be rich without money:

Many a man is rich without money. Thousands of men with nothing in the pocket, and thousands without even a pocket, are rich. A man born with a good, sound constitution, a good stomach, a good heart and good limbs, and a pretty good head-piece, is *rich*. Good bones are better than gold, tough muscles than silver, and nerves that flash fire and carry energy to every function, are better than houses or lands.

It is better than landed estate to have had the right kind of father and mother.

The man is rich who has a good disposition — who is naturally kind, patient, cheerful, hopeful; and who has a flavor of wit and fun in his composition. The hardest thing to get along with in this life is a man's own self. A cross, selfish fellow, a desponding and complaining fellow, a timid, care-burdened man, — these are all born deformed on the inside. Their feet may not limp, but their thoughts do.

A Good Town.

In the small town of Pownal, Vt., containing about two thousand inhabitants, there are three Temperance Associations, having about three hundred members. There are no lager beer saloons in it, the hotels are free from rum, and the streets give no appearance that the work of strong drink is going on. A good state of things is this, in any town.

Life of the Saviour.

LESSON XXXIX.

JESUS AT MATTHEW'S FEAST.

"A friend of publicans and sinners."

SCRIPTURE, — Matt. ix. 9–14; Mark ii. 14–17; Luke v. 27–32.

Question. — Which of the apostles was a publican?

Answer. — Matt. ix. 9.

NOTE. A publican was a Roman tax-gatherer. The taxes assessed upon the conquered provinces were sold by the Roman government, to be collected by the purchasers. They purchased the taxes for less than the sum assessed, and they made their profit by collecting the whole sum assessed. Collecting these taxes in conquered provinces, they were despised and hated by the people, and were cut off from all social relations excepting among themselves. They protected their business by inducing the government to pass severe laws to aid them in collecting the taxes. Dishonest publicans frequently collected more than the tax. Luke iii. 13. They were classed with heathen and sinners. Matt. ix. 11; xi. 19, and xviii. 17. Yet some of them were honest and devout.

Q. — Did Matthew leave his business and follow the Saviour?

A. — Matt. ix. 9.

Q. — What honorable fact does Luke mention which Matthew omitted to state respecting himself?

A. — Luke v. 28.

Q. — What did Jesus attend at Matthew's house?

A. — Matt. ix. 10.

Q. — What was the business of most of the persons who were at the feast?

A. — Matt. ix. 10.

Q. — When the Pharisees saw Jesus eating with these publicans, what question did they ask his disciples?

A. — Matt. ix. 11.

NOTE. The strict Jews observed two fasts each week; one on the second day and the other on the fifth. It is probable that Matthew gave his feast upon one of these days. Consequently, the Pharisees were doubly surprised, to see Jesus participating in a feast given to publicans, and in seeing him feasting upon one of their days for fasting.

Q. — What did Jesus say when he overheard the inquiry?

A. — Matt. ix. 12.

NOTE. Jesus shows the Pharisees that their complaint was unfounded even upon their own principles; for if the publicans were morally and religiously corrupt, they were in need of his presence and influence to restore them. The pure and good did not need it.

Q. — Of what scripture did he charge them to go and learn the meaning?

A. — Matt. ix. 13; Hosea vi. 6.

Christ came to lead sinners to repentance, not by standing far off from them, but by coming close to them and making them feel the power of his wisdom and holiness. He came for all classes of men, and no matter what the world might say or do, he continued to do the work his Father gave him.

Hidden Seed

Initial Bible Enigma.

What robber did the Jews decide
That Pilate should release?
In what land did Jesus hide,
Till Herod's reign should cease?

When back from Egypt, in what place
Did Jesus' parents stay?
What messenger before his face
Came to prepare the way?

What man fell dead for telling lies,
At the apostle's feet?
And when the Saviour did arise,
Who first her Lord did meet?

What man his master did betray,
Then killed himself outright?
Who, once, to learn the heavenly way,
To Jesus came by night? *Little Sower.*

Answers.

MAY 27. Charity; Humble; Ruin; Idolatry; Sin; Temperance. Christ.

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